

# Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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## MINUTES

July 13, 2015  
(Adopted September 14, 2015)

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**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:** Larry Johnston, Fred Stump. **ABSENT:** Tim Fesko

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS:** Shields Richardson, John Wentworth. **ABSENT:** Sandy Hogan

**COUNTY STAFF:** Scott Burns, Garrett Higerd, Gerry Le Francois, Megan Mahaffey, C.D. Ritter

**TOWN STAFF:** Grady Dutton

**CALTRANS:** Ryan Dermody, Brent Green, David Bloom

**ESTA:** John Helm

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1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Fred Stump called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and attendees recited the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

3. **MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Approve minutes of June 8, 2015, as amended: Item 4C: Stump comment: ~~Keep insertion from Mono.~~ (Richardson/Johnston. Ayes: 3. Abstain: Wentworth. Absent: Fesko, Hogan.)

4. **ADMINISTRATION**

A. **Regional Surface Transportation Project (RSTP):** Megan Mahaffey requested RSTP funding from last fiscal year, got contract, met with entities. Projects: Environmental Impact Report for Regional Transportation Plan; and Public Works striping and signage. Dutton: Software issues, maintenance work.

**MOTION:** Authorize executive director's signature on RSTP. (Richardson/Johnston. Ayes: 4. Absent: Fesko, Hogan.)

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Johnston:** Met with Green at Caltrans in Bishop. **Wentworth:** New commission seats: Jo Bacon to ESTA, Wentworth replaced her at LTC. **Richardson:** Met with Green at Caltrans, got acronym list. **Stump:** Broken ESTA bus stop in Chalfant. Water event Thursday night, Caltrans lateral ditches parallel highway; if not cleaned, issues occur. Commended Grady Dutton on Convict Lake Road. With concurrence of LTC, prepare resolution of appreciation to Jo Bacon.

6. **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION**

A. **Eastern California Transportation Planning Partnership MOU:** Gerry Le Francois stated draft fund estimate due for release this week potentially impacts MOU projects going forward. 395/14 improvement projects: CA funds 40%, county of origin 40%, other two counties 10% each. N. Mojave was first big project, Olancho/Cartago getting ready, also Freeman Gulch segments 1 and 2. Money to Black Rock and Manzanar. Lots of money south, regionalism. Eastern California Transportation Planners Partnership (ECTPP) met two weeks ago. No construction dollars to Freeman segment 2, allocated extra funds earlier. Issue is identifying construction money and/or Kern COG paying back additional 20% loaned by Inyo and Mono in future projects. Freeman on hiatus unless construction dollars programmed. Current

fiscal 2015-16 demand about \$560 million, capacity to allocate is \$430,000. Projects will be delayed. District 9 working with headquarters on Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). What if 2016 STIP is 0? Draft due Wednesday. Averaged six, but as many as 10 in good year.

Johnston: Zero for us or whole state? Le Francois: State has ITIP. Planning and environmental clearance to four-lane. Rurals suffer more. Not look good. Kern COG priority is Greater Bakersfield. SR 14 not highest priority. So, wait to see fund estimate. If no additional money goes to Kern COG, Freeman is not a priority. Johnston: Passing lanes eligible for ITIP?

Dermody: Freeman segment 1 is funded. Le Francois: Can't move forward on components till have full financial plan. Richardson: Deborah Hess talked about China Lake. Dermody: Will look at Defense Access funding. Le Francois: 10% of \$34 million. Past commissioner worried about equity and payback. Strict accounting? No. Always been generous with STIP shares, a lot of mileage. If \$6 million all on local roads, not approve RTIP.

Richardson: Will Kern COG repay on Freeman 1 and 2? Other projects? Le Francois: Inyokern started, but put on hold. Dermody: Original project shifted to passing lanes. Things up and down, back up in couple years, eventually get four lanes.

Le Francois: Feel good about High Point, as Caltrans did not use STIP shares. Johnston: Laying groundwork for future. Roads in Mono in good shape except for Conway. Shoulder widening, etc.

Stump: SR 178 tied into segments 1 or 2? Could shares from earlier STIP cycles be pulled back? Successful argument for countywide preventive maintenance. Occurring concurrently with HUTA (Highway Users Tax Account), so double whammied.

Le Francois: Will verify when 20% extra was added. Unprogrammed share balance, money in reserve. Will send draft Wednesday. Stump: Leaving segment 2 shares sitting there is bargaining point to get something in 2016 cycle. Already committed, need to continue with own planning and improvements. Le Francois: Take money off table? Who else runs for exits? Inyo on hook for 40% for Olancho/Cartago. Stump: In for long haul, how about joining us? Johnston: Projects in sequence, eventually get funded. CTC hasn't scrutinized local projects as much. Mono has best roads in state, cooperating with other agencies. Dutton: Working regionally is appreciated by CTC. Not "I/me/mine." Johnston: Shining model!

Le Francois: RTIP due Dec. 15 at headquarters. Know in November what CA will spend its money on. Usually adopt ITIP same time as RTIPs from 58 counties.

Johnston to Green: Same exercise of looking at programming future projects. Green: District 5 eliminated projects. District 9 made no commitment to move any projects out. Headquarters is in same exercise with all districts. Special session with governor. No new capacity in STIP for allocating additional projects. \$130 million in hole, not out for four to five years. Constant cycle. Awaiting fund estimate. Allocation plan may not happen. Leaving money there is good idea. Looks like 30% of shares are tied up. Headquarters loves partnering in MOUs. For much smaller counties, adds credibility if ask for extras. Segment 2: If no construction funding, sell it back.

Green: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) document signed for Olancho/Cartago, culmination of four years of work. Anticipate public comment might not take as long. Dermody: 60-day review. Suggest BOS, LTC, and Town write comment letters. Stump: Get Inyo's comments first before jumping in. Not sugar coat from our end. Green: Comment start not set yet.

## 7. TRANSIT

A. **Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA):** John Helm noted short-range consultant updating, public outreach Thursday, board update Friday, done later in fall. Operations: Summer started strong, awaiting MMSA Reds shuttle, ridership in June up 10%, busy Fourth. Began third Lakes Basin trolley, directly to Horseshoe Lake every 15 minutes, 30-min turnaround. Continue Saturdays to address demand.

Town Council approved late-night trolley till 2 a.m. Summer business has grown, warranted more hours. California Transportation Commission approved additional trolley. Working with vendors. Arrange purchase for delivery prior to next summer.

Wentworth: Speed issues on Lakes Basin path. Advise people what to expect. Bikes on downhill. Counters on path to get data? Issue with electric bikes: appropriate? USFS said no power bikes on trails.

Johnston: New Mammoth Express had negative comments about return trip. Anyone asking how it's working, how riders feel about it? Catching Reno bus means sketchy departure time, more inconvenient.

Helm: Open dialog with regular commuters. Least opportune time to launch service. On-time performance in summer worse due to road construction, much worse than winter weather delays. It will get better, but not immediately. Doesn't make sense to add another bus. Low ridership on 7 p.m. bus. Stump: Backup plan in case bus malfunctions? Helm: Well positioned to respond, fleet of vehicles and drivers.

Watching on computer, in phone contact; if significant delay, schedule additional driver/bus from here. Stump: Users could expect vehicle? Helm: Yes.

**B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Scott Burns presented photos of Dick Whittington's recognition by Yosemite Superintendent Neubacher. Annual YARTS meeting July 27, Authority Advisory Committee. Last meeting allocated \$5,000 to YARTS, Mariposa \$55,000, Merced considering bumping up also. Five-year budget exercise this month, looking long term. Ridership survey later this month. Wentworth: Ridership numbers? Burns: Later.

Stump: Complaints on SR 120 road work. Word on Madera opposition? Burns: Losing voice a bit. Johnston: Hard to fight something when it's good. Stump: Oakhurst wants YARTS to stop, but Madera does not want it.

## 8. CALTRANS

**A. Freeman Gulch widening project:** See item 6A.

**B. California high-speed rail (HSR):** Brent Green presented background. HSR was separate entity earlier, but reorganized under same umbrella as Caltrans. Secretary. Kelly identified HSR as #1 priority. When first started, skeptical. One of business models is consultant work as opposed to state work. Made sense, yet held HSR back; fewer agents. Grabbed some of Caltrans members. HSR fighting same learning curve as Caltrans. HSR agents have to call in for more money, return to property owner. Main problem is property acquisition. Go to DPW board, appraisal to various entities whereas Caltrans takes straight to LTC. No legislative authority like Caltrans, so need legislation. Have started projects. Green contacted HSR office, but got no information; representative would be willing to come out. First phase near Fresno. Statewide connectivity in future plans for HSR.

Wentworth: Opportunities to connect, like YARTS? How integrate into it? Stump: Palmdale, ESTA bus or Sacramento/Reno. Dermody: Southern portion through Tehachapi. Dutton: Set up video conference. Johnston: Bulk of work in Central Valley. Green: Proposal to Las Vegas, lots BLM land. Nothing recent. Stump: Took planning in college, talked about San Francisco/San Diego.

**C. Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Ryan Dermody highlighted shoulder-widening projects on US 395 and US 6, south of White Mountain Estates project, adjacent to subdivision; three shoulder projects combined into one large project. White Mountain Phase II developer has applied for shoulder turn-pocket mitigation.

Higerd: Developer moving forward on improvements; bonding for some, hopefully not this one. Dermody: Caltrans would not pay for turn pocket, as it's development mitigation.

Richardson: Portable sign at rockfall (north of Lee Vining) works well.

Stump: Speed limit through Chalfant? Seniors, kids cross highway with 60-mph speeds. Flashing signs help.

## 9. QUARTERLY REPORTS

**A. Town of Mammoth Lakes:** Grady Dutton noted Saturday bus coverage. Extended trolley hours. Electric bikes illegal on bike path. Different classes of bike trails.

Wentworth: Met with Caltrans on striping of Minaret Road, SR 203, etc.

Dermody: Significant concern about airport fence, deer roaming around highway. Maybe install something on other side of highway. Caltrans is conducting a wildlife study this year to look at Crowley Lake-to-SR 203 segment.

Stump: Rock Creek and Convict Lake bikes fast on downhill. USFS and Town had regulatory issues.

**B. Mono County:** Garrett Higerd presented oral report. Under construction: June Lake Streets, paving. Convict Lake Road: Coordination with USFS. Oct. 9 last contract day. Rock Creek Road: Longer closures last week till lightning arrived. Back to 30-min maximum delays up and down. Preventative maintenance: Staff started, will complete fresh update for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cycle. Airport Road programmed 2018-19. Key tie-in to environmental work, animal movement, bike lanes. Other projects: Safety improvement. High benefit/cost ratio, so not well positioned to compete. Work with Dutton on FAA projects. Mono airports now unclassified. Restricts projects available for FAA funding.

Johnston: In Lee Vining, street trees, vines on fence on east side toward visitor center. Caltrans and Mono versions vary. Irrigation line in sidewalk. Mono yard coming along well.

Higerd: Trees hit on weekend by accident. Stump: Trees staff cost intensive. Look nice, but need risk vs. ~~game~~ gain analysis. Occupying more time and money than they should. Looking at financial crunch, dealing with trees takes away from other things

C. **Caltrans:** Ryan Dermody noted some projects were missing. Focus on shoulder-widening efforts. Many alignments are on riparian and wetland habitats, which will need increased environmental review.

10. **INFORMATIONAL**

A. **Mammoth Express grant**

B. **Nevada “electric highway:** Nevada is taking advantage of Tesla operation. Maybe tie into Eastern Sierra. Maybe universal adaptor. Not just supercharger, but also slower so anyone can use it. Tesla installed chargers in Mojave, Lone Pine, park-and-ride in Mammoth. Overall plan is electric highways across country. Who talks to Tesla? Caltrans talked about Mojave. Stump: Have Tesla presentation. Dutton: Here last week at park-and-ride. Could Caltrans invite Tesla?

C. **District 8 bicycle access lanes**

D. **Senate Bill 16 support letters**

E. **Senate Bill 321 support letter**

11. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) No mandatory action items; 2) ESTA quarterly; 3) Jo Bacon resolution; 4) widenings on US 6; 5) Tesla. Maybe cancel Aug. 10 meeting and meet Sept. 14?

12. **ADJOURN** at 11:05 a.m. to August 10, 2015

*Prepared by C.D. Ritter, LTC secretary*